During campaign for November 1 general election, Danish Social Democrats call for alliance with right-wing parties

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Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has called a snap general election for November 1, seven months ahead of the scheduled 2023 vote. The move, prompted by a threatened vote of no confidence in her minority Social Democrat government, sets the stage for a further lurch to the right in official Danish politics following the vote.

In her election announcement and throughout the campaign, Frederiksen has argued for a coalition of the "centre" in the next parliament that would mark an end of "bloc politics." Denmark's main parties have traditionally been grouped into two blocs, known as red and blue, roughly "left" and right within the framework of capitalist politics. The "red bloc" consists of Frederiksen's Social Democrats, the Social Liberals, and two parties claiming to be socialist, the Socialist People's Party (SF) and Red-Green Alliance (RGA). The "blue bloc" includes the Liberals (Venstre), Conservatives, Liberal Alliance, and two far-right parties, the Danish People's Party (DF) and New Right.

Since 2019, Frederiksen has ruled in a minority government backed by the other "red bloc" parties. Over the past three years, her government has overseen the intensification of right-wing policies, including a major increase in defence spending, huge bailouts to big business during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the enforcement of a vicious anti-immigrant campaign borrowed from the far-right.

The Danish government is a strident supporter of the US/NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, having supplied Harpoon anti-ship missiles and other weaponry to the Ukrainian army. It was also one of the leading proponents of a profits before life, "let it rip" pandemic policy, becoming one of the first governments in Europe to scrap all public health measures against COVID-19.

Frederiksen was forced to call the election after the Social Liberals pledged to table a no-confidence vote over the prime minister's decision to cull Denmark's 17 million mink population during the pandemic. The cull was ordered amid concern that a new COVID variant discovered in the mink population could endanger the immunity provided by vaccines if it spread to humans. A commission of inquiry found in June that Frederiksen broke the law by issuing the order and had "grossly" misled parliament over the issue.

Notably, one would search the political establishment in vain for similarly sharp criticism of her government's ruthless policy of mass infection and death, which made Denmark a global centre of the Omicron variant and its subvariants last winter. Officially, over 7,300 people have died from COVID in a country with just 5.8 million inhabitants.

Frederiksen's call for a formal alliance with the right-wing parties is the logical conclusion of her first term in office, which saw the Social Democrats collaborate with the Liberals and Conservatives on a number of key issues. A cross-party agreement to reform Denmark's labour laws to loosen labour regulations was concluded in late 2021. Within two weeks of Putin's reactionary invasion of Ukraine, the Social Democrats and SF united with the Liberals and Conservatives to reach a defence agreement that committed Denmark to increase its defence spending to 2 percent of GDP by 2033 and hold a referendum to overturn Copenhagen's refusal to participate in European Union (EU) military operations.

If a formal agreement outside of the traditional blocs is struck, it would include the newly established Moderates, who are led by former Liberal Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen. The Moderates have refused to join one of the traditional blocs, which will likely give Rasmussen considerable influence over the composition of the new government. When he served as prime minister between 2015 and 2019, Rasmussen relied on support from the far-right DF. In addition, he waged savage attacks on the welfare system. The Social Liberals say they will back Frederiksen continuing as prime minister, but only if her government is based on an agreement with Rasmussen's Moderates or other right-wing parties.

Denmark's political establishment integrated the far-right Danish People's Party into official politics some two decades ago under Liberal Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, subsequently secretary-general of NATO. The Social Democrats gave crucial support to this process. The Social Democrat-led government under Prime Minister Helle

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Thorning-Schmidt maintained a range of anti-immigrant measures imposed by its Liberal predecessor and imposed sweeping austerity between 2011 and 2015. The policies pursued by Frederiksen's government over the past three years have bolstered the far-right still further.

Frederiksen retained a racist policy implemented by her Liberal predecessors that permits authorities to designate low-income neighbourhoods with large immigrant populations as "ghettos." Once a neighbourhood is a "ghetto," penalties for certain crimes can be doubled and children can be forced to take classes in "Danish values." Residents of some "ghettos" have been forcibly relocated to facilitate the destruction of public housing and gentrify neighbourhoods.

Although the DF has fallen considerably in the polls, it is being challenged by a party that stands even further to the political right: the New Right. Established in 2015, the New Right combines calls for Denmark to leave the EU with an appeal to reduce immigration to zero by abrogating Copenhagen's acceptance of international treaties on asylum seekers and refugees.

A third far-right party, the Denmark Democrats, was established earlier this year by former Liberal Interior Minister Inger Støjberg. Støjberg became a darling of the far-right after illegally separating young asylum-seeking couples on the pretext of combatting "child brides" during Lars Løkke Rasmussen's government. She also introduced Denmark's notorious "jewelry law," which allows border guards to confiscate valuable items from asylum seekers to help pay for their stay. Støjberg was subsequently convicted of lying to parliament about the existence of "child marriages" among asylum seekers and spent two months in prison.

The headlong rush of Danish politics to the far-right is a devastating indictment of the politics pursued by the pseudo-left and ex-Stalinist SF and Red-Green Alliance. These parties have made it their top priority to keep the working class and young people subordinated to the official system of "bloc politics," giving the Social Democrats a free hand to embrace the policies of the right while enjoying cover from the "left."

In 2011, the SF and RGA reached an agreement to allow Thorning-Schmidt to head a Social Democrat government. Her four years in power saw a continuation of Liberal-imposed austerity budgets, anti-immigrant measures, and support for US imperialist-led wars in the Middle East.

In talks following the 2019 election on securing Frederiksen the majority she required in parliament to become prime minister, both "left" parties argued that the agreement was justified to prevent the right-wing parties from returning to power. In reality, they played the decisive role in enabling Frederiksen to go even further in embracing right-wing and far-right policies and thereby strengthened the far-right politically.

Denmark's two pseudo-left parties have themselves swung sharply to the right. Immediately after Putin's invasion, both the SF and RGA joined with the government in voting to send anti-tank missiles and other weaponry to Ukraine. The SF endorsed Frederiksen's agreement with the Liberals and Conservatives to massively increase Denmark's military spending. It also campaigned for a yes vote in the June referendum on scrapping Denmark's opt-out from EU defence policy.

For its part, the RGA posed as an opponent of these parts of the defence agreement, but the government was not dependent on its support for their adoption. The political duplicity of this stance is underscored by the fact that it is thanks to the RGA that Frederiksen's pro-war Social Democrats have been able to govern for the past three-and-a-half years. Moreover, the RGA enthusiastically welcomed another component of the defence agreement that commits Denmark to eliminate all imports of Russian gas.

At its party conference in May, the Red-Green Alliance invited a delegation from Ukraine's Sotsialnyi Rukh (Social Movement) to participate. Sotsialnyi Rukh has been built up with extensive financial backing from the US state Department and has played a leading role in propagandising for the aggressive US-NATO war on Russia, which aims to subjugate Russia, reduce it to the status of a semi-colony and place its vast natural resources under the direct control of the North American and European imperialists.

The conference followed a trip by RGA MP Søren Søndergaard as part of a European Left delegation to a conference in Ukraine sponsored by Sotsialnyi Rukh, which could only have taken place with the approval of the far-right Zelensky government in Kiev. Søndergaard is a former leading member of the Pabloite Socialist Workers Party (SAP), one of the RGA's most important factions.

The RGA's conference agreed to drop the party's call for an immediate Danish withdrawal from NATO. This embrace of the US-NATO war was covered over with a vague formulation pledging the RGA to continue to work for Danish withdrawal from NATO at an unspecified future date when an "alternative security architecture" is established.

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